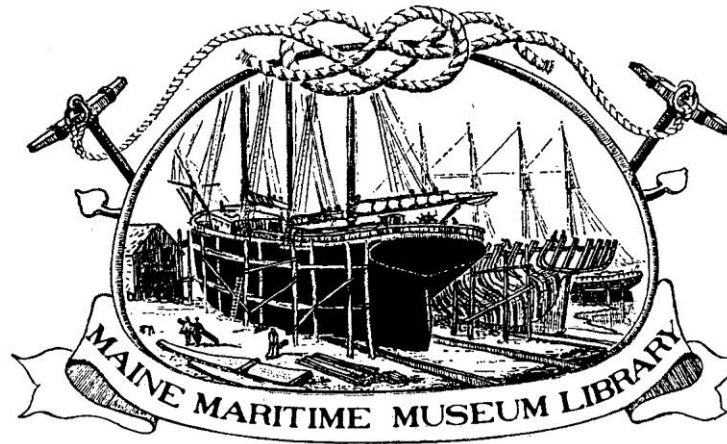


**Maine Maritime Museum Library**  
243 Washington Street  
Bath, Maine 04530-1638  
(207) 443-1316, ext. 328, 336



**Inventory for  
Manuscript Collection  
MS - 189**

**Potter Family Papers  
1827-1885**

by  
Elisabeth Meier  
November 2018

½ box  
0.2 linear feet  
*Accession nos. 77.22.5 and 79.143.359*

## Copyright Restrictions

The material described herein is the physical property of the Maine Maritime Museum Library. **Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors of the various items, or to their legal representatives, or to Maine Maritime Museum.** For further information, consult the library staff.

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted materials.

Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specified conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be *“used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship or research.”* If a user later uses a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excess of “fair use,” that user may be liable for copyright infringement.

This institution reserves the right to refuse to accept a copying order if fulfillment of the order is judged to be in violation of copyright law.

It is the user’s responsibility to understand the copyright law concerning the use of the historical documents contained in this library.

## Copyright © 2018 by Maine Maritime Museum

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form, or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior permission of the Maine Maritime Museum Library.

## Abstract

**Woodbury H. Potter (1807-1883)**

**James D. Potter (1834-1886)**

**Papers, 1827-1885**

½ box

Shipbuilding family from Bath, Maine

This collection contains accounts, bills, correspondence, ephemera, and other material from two generations of the Potter family of Bath, Maine. The bulk of the collection is from Woodbury H. Potter, who built scows, sloops, and other small vessels in the early nineteenth century, and his son, James D. Potter, who spent several years at sea before joining a bridge-building firm in Chicago. It also contains some correspondence among close family and friends.

Gifts of Dr. Charles E. Burden.

MS-189. Accession #77.22.5 and 79.143.359.

Finding aid (folder level control) in repository.

**Added entries—persons:**

Potter, James D. (1834-1886)

Potter, Woodbury A. (1845-1915)

Potter, Woodbury H. (1807-1883)

**Added entries—corporate bodies (including vessels):**

*Arrowsic* (schooner)

*Helen* (schooner)

*Hope* (sloop)

*Ino* (sloop)

*Juno* (schooner)

*Mary E. Riggs* (ship)

*Prairie* (sloop)

*Reuben S. Hunt* (schooner)

*Tamaro* (ship)

*Victoria Reid* (ship)

*W.V. Moses* (ship)

*Winona* (sloop)

**Added entries—key terms:**

Accounts

Bridges – Design and construction

Cotton trade

Lighthouse

Lumber trade

Merchant mariners

Scows

Shipbuilding – Maine – Bath

Shipowners

Sugar trade

### **Acquisition**

This collection was donated to the museum in two parts by Dr. Charles E. Burden. The account book was given in 1977 and the loose papers in 1979.

### **Restrictions**

There are no restrictions on this collection.

### **Physical Condition**

The papers are all in good condition with usual wear. Cheaper papers are beginning to degrade.

### **Historical Note**

Woodbury H. Potter (1807-1883), son of William and Mary Potter of Phippsburg, Maine, had a varied career in Bath's maritime industries. He is listed as a merchant in the 1850 census, a shipbuilder in 1860, and a retired boat-builder in 1870. As a shipbuilder, Potter produced small scows and lighters in Bath. He also partnered with the Moses family, as Potter and Moses, to build the ship *W.V. Moses* in 1856. In addition, Potter invested in a variety of local vessels, from lighters to large ships, and managed the business of several of these as part of the firm W. & W.H. Potter.

Potter's first child, James Drummond Potter, was born in 1834. His first wife, Emma Ann Drummond (1811-1834), died a few days afterwards. Potter remarried Irene Morse in 1837 and had three more children: Emma Ann (b. 1838), Woodbury A. (1845-1915), and Albion M. (1849-1914). All three sons went to sea as young men before settling into careers ashore. Woodbury A. Potter eventually became one of Bath's leading ship carvers, and Albion M. became a joiner.

James D. Potter went west to Wisconsin with his brother Albion in 1868, and stayed there after Albion returned home. James eventually found steady work with Rust & Coolidge, a Chicago company that built bridges across the Midwest and Rocky Mountain regions. He traveled extensively with the firm, but retired to Bath shortly before his death in 1886.

### **Scope and Content Note**

This collection contains material from Woodbury H. Potter and James D. Potter with a few papers from other family members.

The bulk of the papers from Woodbury H. Potter are accounts related to shipbuilding, vessel management, timber sales, and business with W. & W.H. Potter and Potter & Moses. These mention a wide range of vessels, from small scows and gundalows to ships in the Liverpool cotton trade. There is also a folder of charter parties, customs house receipts, and similar documents from Potter's vessels. A few business letters, some household bills, and accounts for side ventures like selling hay are here as well.

Most of the material from James D. Potter is from his time out west. There are accounts for his work with Rust & Coolidge and a time book noting the hours that he and his crew worked on various bridge projects. More personally, there is a small collection of clippings and

ephemera related to his work and travels, a folder of correspondence between Potter and his friends in the Midwest, and a photo portrait that he sent home from Chicago.

James D. Potter's brothers, Woodbury A. and Albion M. Potter, are represented in family correspondence; the remainder of the family receives brief, if any, mention. Letters between Woodbury H. Potter and his three sons give a detailed, if fragmented, picture of the brothers' early careers at sea. Later letters between the brothers and their acquaintances outline the family's life in Bath.

### Box and Folder List

Box	Folder
1	1 Woodbury H. Potter, bills and accounts, 1830-1883 and undated
	2 Account book, shipbuilding and vessel operations, 1839-1881
	3 Account book, <i>Ino</i> (sloop) and <i>Prairie</i> (sloop), c. 1867-1871
	4 Vessel papers, <i>Arrowsic</i> (schooner), <i>Helen</i> (schooner), <i>Prairie</i> (sloop), <i>Tamaro</i> (ship), <i>Victoria</i> (ship), and <i>Winona</i> (sloop), 1849-1873
	5 Business correspondence, 1827-1854 and undated
	6 James D. Potter, bills, 1869-1884
	7 Bills and accounts with Rust & Coolidge, 1883-1885 and undated
	8 Workman's time book, bridge construction, c. 1882-c.1883
	9 Correspondence, 1883-1885
	10 Photograph, c. 1877
	11 Newspaper clippings and ephemera, c. 1868-1881
	12 Potter family, correspondence, 1865-1883
	13 Miscellaneous